As time passed Napoleon also claimed that the city of Naples was a focus of anti-French conspiracies, and that by the queen's influence Russia had occupied Corfu. The independence of Etruria, under the so-called protection of the French troops quartered in the kingdom, was already a phantom; that of Naples was, in spite of existing treaties, not really more substantial. The King was the obedient servant of his masterful Austrian consort, Maria Carolina, who was the real ruler. She had been told in January that the existence of her power depended upon her attitude. If she would dismiss her minister, Acton, expel the French emigrants, send home the English resident, recall her own from St. Petersburg, and muster out her militia,— in short, "show confidence in France/' — she might continue to reign. No one could doubt that this foretold the speedy end of the Italian Bourbons. The Czar at once recalled his peace envoy from Berlin, for he had not journeyed farther, and immediately Russia and Austria put aside their conflicting ambitions. They could look on at all Napoleon's aggressions, they could even condone the murder of Enghien, and continue their rivalry; but they could no longer do so when Austria felt Venice slipping from her grasp, and Alexander saw his Oriental ambitions forever defeated, as would be the case if the western shore of the Adriatic should fall into his great rival's hands.

So evident was all this to the world that early in May the provisional treaty between England and Russia was already rumored to have been made binding. The French papers denounced the report as another English snare; their St. Petersburg correspondence, written, of course, in their own Paris offices, declared that the coalition had collapsed. The Emperor lingered in Italy, carefully noting the Italian and Austrian dispositions, until July, when at last he hastened to Paris, leaving his